Some of the steps taken by the Government to ensure remunerative prices to Karnataka farmers are:—

(i) Negotiating with Tobacco Trade for declaration of a Minimum Guaranteed Price (MGP) which is higher than the Minimum Support Price announced by the Government.

(ii) Conducting auctions thereby ensuring competitive bidding.

The average price relisation in the current Karnataka auctions has been Rs. 53.12 per kg. till date.

Inquiry into newsprint import

915. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether anti-dumping authority under the Ministry has held inquiry in the mater of import of newsprint from US, Canada and Russia following a petition filed by Indian Newsprint Manufacturers Association;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that domestic industry has suffered by such dumping alongwith names of units which have been closed and the ones which had to reduce production; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to ensure that domestic industry is not subjected to injury in future and those responsible for above import are taken to task?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) The designated authority in the Ministry of Commerce has initiated anti-dumping investigations on 20.12.96 against imports of newsprint from USA, Canada and Russia based on a petition filed by Indain Newsprint Manufacturers Association. Under the provisions of customs Tariff Act and the rules made thereunder, the authority follows a quasi-judicial procedure taking into account submissions made by all the interested parties before making any recommendations. The investigations in the case of newsprint are in progress and no provisional or final findings have been announced so far.

देश में चाय का उत्पादन

916. **श्रीमती मालती शर्मा:** क्या वाणिज्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) गत तीन वर्षों के दौरान देश में चाय का कुल कितना उत्पादन हुआ और उसका वर्ष-वार ब्यौरा क्या है;

(ख) देश में चाय की प्रति वर्ष घरेलू खपत कितनी है; और

(ग) चाय उत्पादक राज्यों का ब्यौरा क्या है?

वाणिज्य मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (डा॰ बोला बुल्ली रमैया): (क) तथा (ख) पिछले तीन वर्षों के दौरान देश में चाय की खपत और उत्पादन निम्नांकित है:—

वर्ष	उत्पादन (मिलियन किग्रा॰)	घरेलू खपत (मिलियन किग्रा॰)
1994	752.89	580
1995*	753.92	595
1996*	780.03	613

*अनुमानित

स्त्रोत : चाय बोर्ड

(ग) चाय के मुख्य उत्पादक राज्य हैं: असम, पश्चिमी बंगाल, तमिलनाडु, केरल और कर्नाटक। इनके अतिरिक्त चाय का उत्पादन त्रिपुरा, बिहार, उत्तरप्रदेश, हिमाचल प्रदेश, सिक्किम, उड़ीसा, अरुणाचल प्रदेश, मणिपुर और नागालैण्ड में भी होता है।

WTO's Committee on balance of payment

917. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any meeting of the World Trade Organisations' Committee on balance of payments was held in January, 1997;

(b) whether any demand was made to India in the said meeting to lift restriction on imports;

(c) if so, by when; and

(d) the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) At this meeting of WTO Committee on Balance-of-payments-Restrictions, major developed countries were of the view that the present balance of payments situation did not warrant a continuation of import restrictions under the cover of balance of payments provisions of Article XVIII of GATT, 1994. They were of the view that India could protect its domestic industry through appropriate tariffs. The Indian delegation had pressed the argument that while the monetary resources position might appear to be satisfactory, there was need for caution and that certain areas of concern had to be taken into account.

In the light of the discussions, the committee agreed to resume the consultation in June 1997 to consider a plan, to be presented by India to eliminate the measures notified under Article XVIII and to conclude the consultations consistently with all relevant WTO balance of payments provisions.

Proposal to promote bilateral trade

918. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to promote bilateral trade and investment with Latin America;

(b) if so, the areas identified therefor;

(c) the steps taken to boost trade ties between both the countries; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Bilateral trade and investment are sought to be promoted with the Latin American and Caribbean region in all areas of mutual interest to Trade and Industry of the two sides. Some of the areas that have been identified by the business sides include, power, telecommunications, steel, chemicals & pharmaceuticals, bio-technology, hand tools, auto components, etc.

(c) and (d) All general measures being taken to promote India's trade are applicable to this region as well. These include, exchange of business delegations and participation in exhibitions and trade fairs. Also, an Indo-Brazil Commercial Council was set up. Exclusive Indian trade promotional exhibitions were held in Brazil and Argentina. A Trade Agreement with Trinidad and Tobago was signed and initiatives were taken to revive trade with Cuba.

Economic cooperation opportunities

919. SHRI SANJAY DALIMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether he visited a number of countries for exploring economic cooperation opportunities;

(b) if so, the details thereof, country-wise;

(c) the details of those countries who have agreed to accelerate the process and started their investments;

(d) whether any agreement has also been signed in this regard by Government with any foreign country;

(e) if so, the details thereof, country-wise; and

(f) the steps taken by Government in this regard and to what extent it has been successful in getting the foreign economic cooperation in Indian exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir.